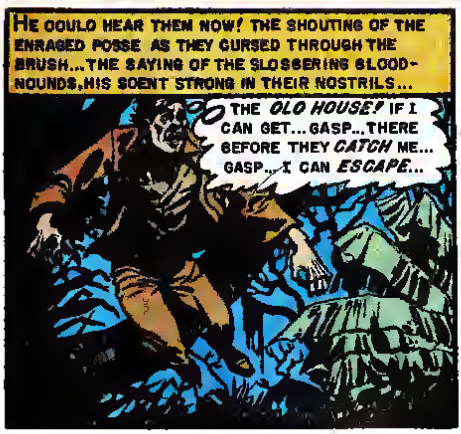
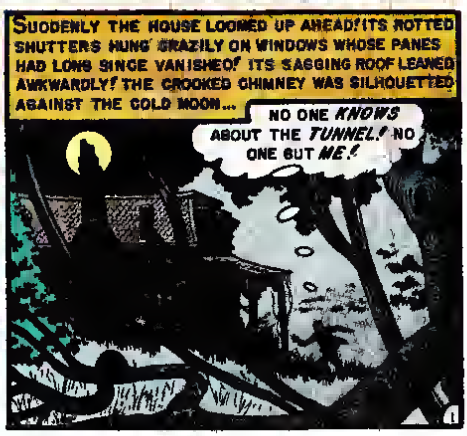
HORROR
THE HAUNT OF FEAR
AN ENTERTAINING COMIC
EC
NO. 5
REPRINT EDITION
FEATURING..
THE OLD WITCH
THE VAULT-KEEPER
THE CRYPT-KEEPER
UGH! WHAT A... MESS! BUT THEY'LL NEVER THINK OF LOOKING FOR A FRESH CORPSE IN THE COFFIN OF A MAN WHO DIED IN 1867!
JOHNNY CRAIG

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!





BRUNO BURST THROUGH THE DECAYED DOOR! THE CRASH OF THE WORM-EATER WOOD ECHOED THROUGH THE EMPTY HOUSE...

THEY'RE GETTING *CLOSER*... BUT I'VE... *I'VE BEATEN THEM!*

HE MADE FOR THE FIREPLACE! IT WAS A HUGE STONE AFFAIR COVERING ALMOST ONE WALL OF THE ROOM...

THE *SECRET ENTRANCE*... THAT I *DISCOVERED*... AS A *BOY*...

THE STEPS WERE THERE, JUST AS HE HAD REMEMBERED THEM! HE STUMBLED DOWN... THE ROTTED WOOD GIVING WAY BENEATH HIS WEIGHT! HE PLUNGED INTO THE BLACKNESS...

YAAAAAAAH!

HE LAY AT THE BOTTOM... IN THE DARKNESS... PANTING! HIS RIGHT LEG THROBBED WITH PAIN! IT WAS BROKEN! ABOVE... THE THUMPING OF BOOTED FEET TOLD HIM THEY WERE IN THE HOUSE...

THEY'LL *NEVER* FIND THE ENTRANCE TO THIS TUNNEL! IT'S MY *SECRET*, ALL *MINE*! *OOH!* MY LEG..

UPSTAIRS, HE COULD HEAR THE MUFFLED VOICES.. THE CONFUSION... THE YELPING OF THE HOUNDS... AS THEY SEARCHED THE HOUSE! BEFORE HIM, THE TUNNEL STRETCHED OUT INTO THE GLOOM...

GOT TO GET MOVIN'! GOT TO GET TO THE OTHER END... TO THE RIVER! WHAT'S *THIS*? *A SHOVEL!* GOOD! I'LL TAKE IT *WITH* ME... IN *CASE*...

THE TUNNEL BRUNO WAS IN WAS OLD! IT HAD BEEN USED AS AN ESCAPE FROM THE HOUSE DURING THE CIVIL WAR... PART OF THE WELL KNOWN "UNDERGROUND RAILWAY"! HE DRAGGED HIMSELF FORWARD...

I WONDER... HOW MANY OTHERS LIKE ME... USED THIS TUNNEL TO ESCAPE FROM THE AUTHORITIES...

AS BRUNO CREPT THROUGH THE BLACK, THOUGHTS FLASHED THROUGH HIS BRAIN! THOUGHTS OF WHY HE WAS THERE! OF HOW IT HAD ALL STARTED! HE REMEMBERED IT ALL SO WELL! FIVE MONTHS AGO... THAT NIGHT AT ELLEN'S HOUSE...

BUT, ELLEN! YOU *MUST* DECIDE BETWEEN US! WE *BOTH* WANT TO *MARRY YOU!* YOU'VE GOT TO PICK *ONE*...

I'M SORRY, BOB! YOU'RE *BOTH* SWEET... *YOU* AND *BRUNO!* I... I *CAN'T* DECIDE!

YES! BRUNO REMEMBERED! THERE IN THE DARKNESS OF THE TUNNEL HE REMEMBERED HIS DECISION! HE HAD DECIDED TO MAKE UP ELLER'S MIND! SETTLE IT...ONCE AND FOR ALL...
HE'S COMING...NOW! HE'LL NEVER KNOW WHAT HIT HIM...
AS BOB HAD PASSED THE SPOT WHERE HE HAD HID, BRUNO HAD HURLED HIMSELF UPON HIM...
AGAIN AND AGAIN THE LEAD PIPE HAD COME DOWN...
...UNTIL BOB HAD MOVED NO MORE.
NOW TO DISPOSE OF THE BODY! SOME PLACE WHERE THEY'LL NEVER FIND IT!
BRUNO HAD LIFTED HIS DEAD RIVAL ONTO HIS SHOULDERS! A PLAN HAD FORMED IN HIS MIND! HE CARRIED THE BODY TO THE CIVIL WAR BURIAL GROUNDS...
NO ONE GETS BURIED HERE ANY MORE! THEY USE THE NEW CEMETERY NEARER TO TOWN...
HE HAD LEFT THE BODY AND SEARCHED A NEIGHBORING FARM! AFTER HAVING FOUND WHAT HE WAS LOOKING FOR, HE HAD RETURNED WITH THE SHOVEL! THEN HE BEGAN TO DIG...
THE GRAVE MARKER SAYS 'THADDIUS GODKIN...DIED 1867!' THERE SHOULDN'T BE MUCH LEFT OF HIM...
SOON A HOLLOW THUD TOLD BRUNO HE HAD STRUCK OLD THADDIUS GODKIN'S COFFIN! HE LIFTED THE ROTTED LID...
NOTHING BUT BONES AND SHREDS OF CLOTHING! THIS WILL DO FINE...
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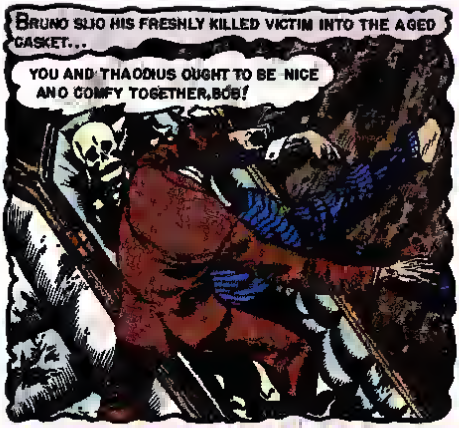
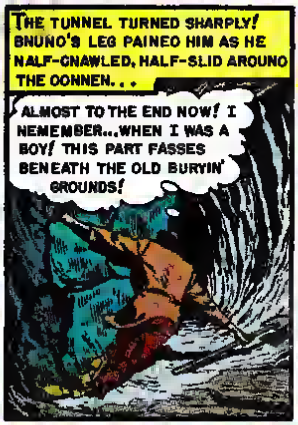

BRUNO SLID HIS FRESHLY KILLED VICTIM INTO THE AGED CASKET...
YOU AND THADDUS OUGHT TO BE NICE AND COMFY TOGETHER, BOB!

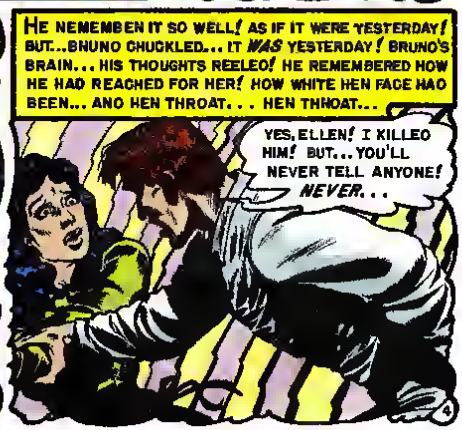
OF COURSE THEY NEVER FOUND HIM! BRUNO LAUGHED TO HIMSELF AS HE MOVED THROUGH THE TUNNEL...
WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT TO LOOK IN THE GRAVE OF A MAN BURIED IN 1867?

THEN BRUNO THOUGHT OF ELLEN OF WHAT HE TOLD HER AFTER BOB "DISAPPEARED"...
HE'S PROBABLY RUN OFF, ELLEN! MAYBE TO THE BIG CITY! THIS OUGHT TO SHOW YOU WHO LOVES YOU MOST!
I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT, BRUNO!


THE TUNNEL TURNED SHARPLY! BRUNO'S LEG PAINED HIM AS HE HALF-CRAWLED, HALF-SLID AROUND THE CORNER...
ALMOST TO THE END NOW! I REMEMBER...WHEN I WAS A BOY! THIS PART PASSES BENEATH THE OLD BURYIN' GROUNDS!

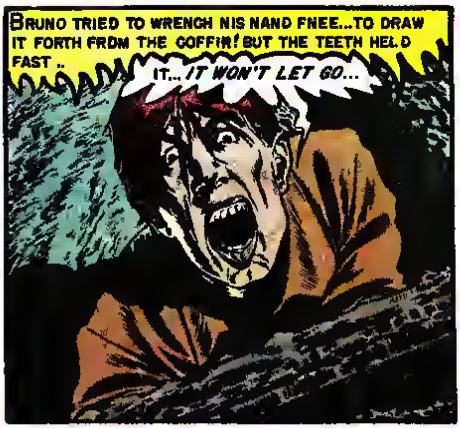
...AND ELLEN! HE HAD MARRIED HER SOON AFTER! HE HAD BEEN HAPPY...SO HAPPY...UNTIL...THAT MORNING...
ELLEN! WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT?
YOU...YOU TALKED IN YOUR SLEEP!

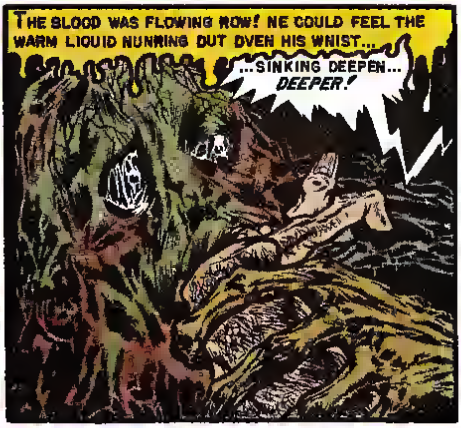
FEAR HAD STOLEN INTO BRUNO'S HEART! IT HAD CRAWLED UP HIS SPINE LIKE A SLIVER OF ICE...HAD POUNDED IN HIS BRAIN...
WHAT DID I SAY, ELLEN?
YOU MURDERED HIM, DIDN'T YOU? YOU MURDERED BOB!


HE REMEMBERED IT SO WELL! AS IF IT WERE YESTERDAY! BUT...BRUNO CHUCKLED... IT WAS YESTERDAY! BRUNO'S BRAIN... HIS THOUGHTS REELED! HE REMEMBERED HOW HE HAD REACHED FOR HER! HOW WHITE HER FACE HAD BEEN... AND HER THROAT... HER THROAT...
YES, ELLEN! I KILLED HIM! BUT...YOU'LL NEVER TELL ANYONE! NEVER...

YES, HER THROAT! HER SOFT WHITE THROAT! HOW EASILY HE HAD SLIPPED HIS FINGERS ABOUT IT! HOW SIMPLE IT HAD BEEN TO CLOSE THEM...TIGHTER... TIGHTER...UNTIL...
SHE... SHE'S DEAD!
AND MRS. LANE! PRYING, SPYING MRS. LANE! SHE HAD BEEN WATCHING FROM HER WINDOW! SHE SCREAMED! HE COULDN'T STAND SCREAMING! SUNO RUSHED FROM HIS HOUSE...SNATCHING THE BREAD KNIFE FROM THE TABLE...
YOU MUSTN'T TELL EITHER, MRS. LANE! YOU'LL HAVE TO DIE, TOO!
YES! IT HAD BEEN YESTERDAY! HE WAS SURE OF IT NOW! MR. LANE HAD BEEN HIM...STANDING OVER MRS. LANE...AND THE KNIFE...WET...STICKY...RED...
HE KILLED HER! GOOD LORD, YOU'VE GOT TO STOP HIM! HE'S MAD! MAD!
THEN...THE POSSE! THEY CHASED HIM! HE HAD HIDDEN IN THE WOODS...BUT THE BLOODHOUNDS FOUND HIS SCENT! AND THEN HE HAD THOUGHT OF IT! THE HOUSE...THE DESERTED OLD HOUSE WITH THE TUNNEL HE HAD FOUND...AS A BOY...
IF...I CAN GET THERE BEFORE THEY CATCH ME...I CAN ESCAPE...THROUGH THE TUNNEL...
AND NOW HE WAS THERE! SOON HE WOULD BE AT THE END...OUT AT THE RIVER ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BURIAL GROUNDS...
THE BLOODHOUNDS! THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO FOLLOW MY SCENT THROUGH THE WATER! I'LL WADE DOWNSTREAM! I'LL GET AWAY!
SUDDENLY, BRUNO CAME TO A STOP! THE TUNNEL! THE TUNNEL ENDED...
MUST HAVE CAVED IN! THE HEAVY RAINS...THE RIVER OVERFLOWED TWO YEARS AGO...
3

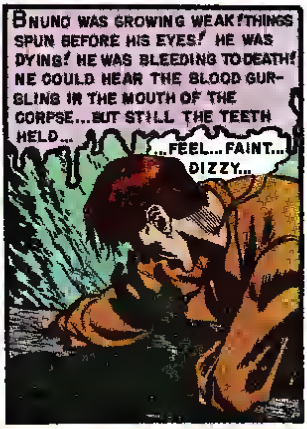
GOT TO DIG MYSELF THROUGH THE REST OF THE WAY! LUCKY I BROUGHT THE SHOVEL...
BRUNO BENT TO THE TASK OF CLEARING HIS WAY THROUGH THE CAVED-IN PART OF THE TUNNEL! HE LAUGHED TO HIMSELF...
I'LL BET THE POSSE'S LOOKIN' FOR ME BACK AT THE HOUSE...
THE SPADE SANK INTO THE SOFT EARTH AHEAD! THERE WASN'T MUCH ROOM TO MOVE AROUND...
I'LL HAVE TO SWITCH THE DIRT FROM UP AHEAD...TO BEHIND ME...
THEN THE SHOVEL STHUCK IT! IT SPLINTERED UNDER THE BLOW! BRUNO LIT A MATCH AND PEERED AT WHAT HE HAD FOUND...
WOOD... BRASS HANDLES...STUDS! IT... IT'S A COFFIN!
AT FIRST HE WAS SHOCKED...BUT THEN HE REMEMBERED! THIS PART OF THE TUNNEL DID PASS UNDER THE BURYING GROUNDS...
GOT TO GET IT OUT OF THE WAY... GOT TO GET BY IT...
THE ROTTED AND DECAYED WOOD GAVE WAY AS BRUNO PUSHED! HIS ARM SHOT FORWARD INTO THE HOLE...
WHAT THE...?
FEELS LIKE... LIKE... A HEAD!
THE STENCH REACHED HIS NOSTRILS! FUNNY! SUCH AN OLD COFFIN WITH A BODY NOT YET FULLY DECOMPOSED? HIS HAND TRAVELED OVER THE FEATURES! THEY WERE PULPY AND SOFT! THEN THE TEETH CLOSED DOWN...
IT... IT'S GOT MY HAND! IT'S BITING ME!
6


BRUNO TRIED TO WRENCH NIS NAND FNEE...TO DRAW IT FORTH FROM THE COFFIN! BUT THE TEETH HEL D FAST ..
IT... IT WON'T LET GO...


THE BLOOD WAS FLOWING NOW! NE COULD FEEL THE WARM LIQUID NUNNING DUT OVEN HIS WNIST...
...SINKING DEEPEN... DEEPER!

HE WAS SCREAMING! NO ONE WOULD NEAR HIM! HE KNEW THAT! BUT HE SCREAMED ANYWAY! THE PAIN... WAS UNBEARABLE...
YAAAAAAAAAAH!

UP ABOVE...THE POSSE WAS SEARCHING THE BUNIAL GROUNDS! THE SCREAMING DNIFTED UP... TNNDUGH THE BLACK EANTH...
D'YA HEAR THAT, JED?
SOUNDED LIKE A SCREAM!


BNUNO WAS GROWING WEAK! THINGS SPUN BEFORE HIS EYES! HE WAS DYING! HE WAS BLEEDING TO DEATH! NE COULD HEAR THE BLOOD GUR-GLING IN THE MOUTH OF THE CORPSE...BUT STILL THE TEETH HELD...
...FEEL... FAINT... DIZZY...

SDDN ALL WAS SILENT! BRUNO WAS DEAD! THE CORPSE RELAXED ITS BRIP! BRUND'S GLAZED EYES STARED AT THE TARNISHED NAMEPLATE ON THE ROTTED COFFIN! IT READ,' THADDIUS GODKIN... DIED 1867'!
THADDIUS GODKIN DIED 1867

NEE, NEE! AND THAT'S MY TALE, DEAR NEADERS! AND A TASTY MORSEL IF I SAY SO MYSELF! A STORY YOU COULD SINK YOUR TEETH INTO! I HOPE THE SHARP CLIMAX DIDN'T SHOCK YOU! ESPECIALLY THE BITING IRONY OF IT! BOB CERTAINLY GOT HIS LAST LICK, DIDN'T HE! YOU SAID A MOUTHFUL!
THE END

THE CRYPT OF TERROR

THE OWNEN OF THE FNEAK CONCESSION WAS A FAT-FACED CNARACTEN NAMED LOOEY GLANTZ! DUT FNONT... HE WAS A GNEAT SHOWMAN...

FOR TWENTY-FIVE OENTS... A FOURTN PART OP A DOLLAN.. YOU'LL SEE TNE BNEATEST OOLLECTION OP FNEAKS TO EVEN...

...BUT BACKSTAGE, NE WAS A *RAT!* NIS FNEAKS DESPISED HIM! HE TNEATED THEM LIKE OIRT! TNENE WAS *FANNY*, THE FAT LADY...

YEAN! YOU NEAND ME! *SMILE* AT THE PEOPLE, YOU OVERGNOWN COW! DDN'T JUST *SIT* TNENE... *EARN* YDUN KEEP!

...AND *XETAL*, TNE INDIAN NUSBEN MAN...

WNAT'S TNE MATTEN, XETAL? ODN'T YOU LIKE YOUN JOS? I WATCHED YOUR ACT! STNETCH IT... STNETCH IT *MORE*...

OOOOWW!

...AND TNE POON PATNETIC CASE THEY CALLED *OORPUS*, TNE ARMLESS AND LEGLESS BOY! NE HAD BEEN BORN WITNOUT LIMBS AND WAS QUITE NELPLESS! BLANTZ WAS *PARTIOULARLY MEAN* TO CORPUS...

FANNY! DDN'T FEED NIM! LET NIM EAT NIMSELF! PUT TNE PLATE DOWN IN FNONT OF NIM...

BUT, MN. BLANTZ! HE

CORPUS WAS FONCED TO EAT LIKE A DOG... AND GLANTZ ROARED WITN SADISTIC DELIGNT...

HAW... HAW... CORPUS! IF YOU HAD WNISKERS... HAW.. HAW... I COULD CALL YOU *FIDO*...

CHOMP CHOMP

GLANTZ NEVER LOST A SINGLE OPPORTUNITY TO INFLICT SEVERE MENTAL AND PHYSICAL TORTURE UPON HIS POOR FREAKS! HIS PERVERTED SENSE OF HUMOR KEPT HIM WELL SUPPLIED WITH INGENIOUS METHODS...

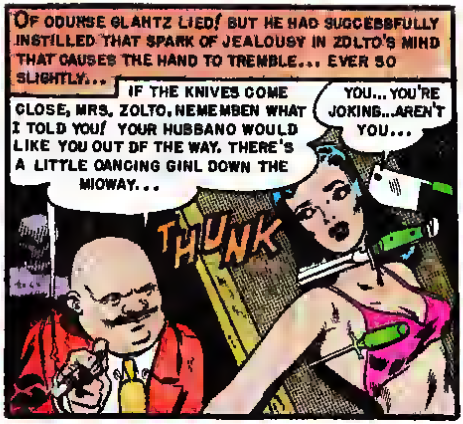
ZOLTO! I WANT TO TALK TO YOU!

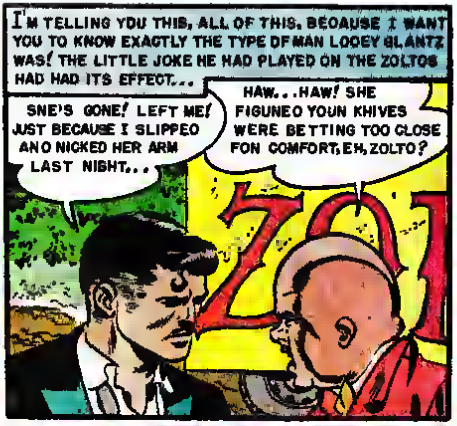
WHAT IS IT MR. GLANTZ?

ZOLTO WAS THE SHARP-EYED KNIFE THROWER! HIS ACT CONSISTED OF THROWING KNIVES, ICE-PICKS, CLEAVERS AND THE LIKE AT HIS WIFE WHO STOOD SPREAD-EAGLED ABOUT TWENTY FEET AWAY...

I JUST THOUGHT YOU OUGHT TO KNOW! YOUR WIFE'S BEEN TWO-TIMING YOU! SHE'S RUNNIN' AROUND WITH A CONCESSION OWNER..

YOU'RE LYING! IT ISN'T TRUE!


OF ODURSE GLANTZ LIED! BUT HE HAD SUCCEBBFULLY INSTILLED THAT SPARK OF JEALOUSY IN ZOLTO'S MIND THAT CAUSES THE HAND TO TREMBLE... EVER SO SLIGHTLY...
IF THE KNIVES COME CLOSE, MRS. ZOLTO, NEMEMBEN WHAT I TOLD YOU! YOUR HUSBAND WOULD LIKE YOU OUT OF THE WAY. THERE'S A LITTLE DANCING GINL DOWN THE MIOWAY...
YOU... YOU'RE JOKING...AREN'T YOU...
THUNK

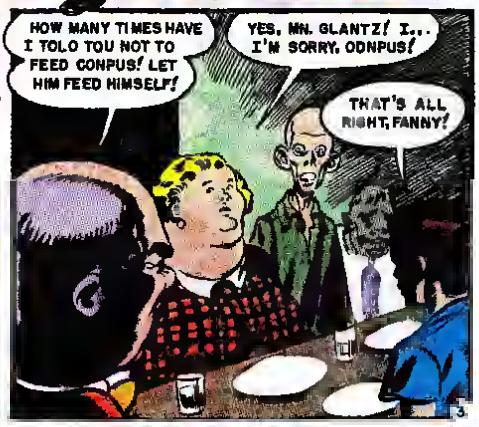

I'M TELLING YOU THIS, ALL OF THIS, BECAUSE I WANT YOU TO KNOW EXACTLY THE TYPE OF MAN LOOEY GLANTZ WAS! THE LITTLE JOKE HE HAD PLAYED ON THE ZOLTOS HAD HAD ITS EFFECT...
SHE'S GONE! LEFT ME! JUST BECAUSE I SLIPPED AND NICKED HER ARM LAST NIGHT...
HAW...HAW! SHE FIGURED YOUR KNIVES WERE BETTING TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT, EH, ZOLTO?
ZOT

IT'S YOUR FAULT, GLANTZ! YOU DID IT! YOU SHOKE ME UP WITH THOSE LIES ABOUT HER...
WATCH YOURSELF, ZOLTO, OR YOU'LL BE LOOKING FOR A NEW CARNY! REMEMBER, YOU'RE NOT A YOUNG MAN...

...SOB...
...SOB...
OON'T WONNY ZOLTO! I KNOW WHENE YOU CAN FINO A NEW PARTNEN FOR YOUN ACT! THENE'S A LITTLE DANCING GIRL... OOWN THE MIOWAY...

A FEW NIGHTS LATER, MRS. ZOLTO RETURNED TO THE CARNY... MAYBE TO MAKE UP. I DON'T KNOW! I SAW HER IN THE CROWD AND WAS AT HER SIDE WHEN ZOLTO WENT INTO HIS KNIFE-THROWING ACT...
THE...THE DANCER... FROM DOWN THE MIDWAY! IT'S TRUE...SOB...TRUE.

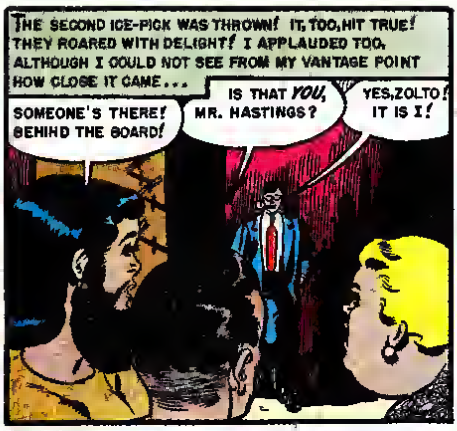
SHE LEFT THE GNOUNDS ONYING! THENE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO! GLANTZ'S LITTLE JOKE HAD BEEN CARRIED TO ITS EXTREME! SHE NEVER CAME BACK! EVEN I BEGAN TO DISLIKE THE EVIL FREAK-SHOW OWNER! ONE EVENING...
IT WAS GOOD OF YOU TO INVITE ME TO YOUN CHOW TABLE, ZOLTO!
IT WAS GOOD OF YOU TO COME, MN. HASTINGS!
FANNY!


HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLO TOU NOT TO FEED CONPUS! LET HIM FEED HIMSELF!
YES, MN. GLANTZ! I... I'M SORRY, OONPUS!
THAT'S ALL RIGHT, FANNY!

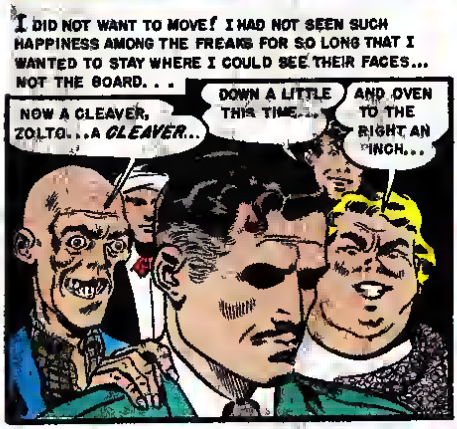
I WAS HORRIFIED TO SEE SUCH INHUMANITY! BUT...WHEN GLANTZ GOT UP AND...
FEED YOURSELF, CORPUS! LIKE... THIS...
GLUG-GH-H!
IT WAS DISGUSTING! GLANTZ HAD PUSHED THAT POOR HELPLESS BOY'S FACE IRTO HIS PLATE! I STARTED TO OBJECT BUT ZOLTO ACTED SOORER...
LEAVE HIM ALONE, BLARTZ!
PUT DOWN THAT KRIFE, ZOLTO!
SNAP!
DON'T YOU EVER TORMENT THAT BOY AGAIN, GLANTZ, OR I WILL PUT DOWR THIS KRIFE---RIGHT THROUGH YOUR UGLY SKULL...
I WAS DUMBSTRUCK WITH HORROR...POWERLESS TO MOVE AS I WATCHED THE ERSUING SCENE! GLANTZ WAS INFURIATED! HE RAD BEEN MADE A FOOL OF IN FRONT OF THE TROUPE! HE RUSHED TO A DORNER OF TNE TENT...
TNREATER ME WITN A KNIFE... WILL YOU?
IT WAS ALL OVER BEFORE I COULD DO AHTTRING! GLARTZ SCOOPED UP TWO IRONS THAT THE FIRE-EATER RAD BEER HEATIRG FOR THE EVERING PERFORMARCE! THEY WERE WHITE HOT! HE RUSHED AT TRE PARALYZED ZOLTO...
I'LL TEACH YOU!
SSSSS
WE SAT TNERE...THE FREAKS AND I... AS GLANTZ RAMMED THE WHITE-ROT IRONS INTO ZOLTO'S EYES! HIS SHRIEK OF AGONIZING PAIN ECHOED UP AND DOWN THE DESERTED MIDWAY...
TOU FOOL! YOU'VE BLIRDED RIM!
RE... HE HAD IT GOMING!
NYAAAAA
ZOLTO LAT OR THE GROURD... HIS FACE OUPPED IR HIS ARMS! HE WAS SCREAMING IN AGONY! TRE SMELL OF SURRED FLESH WAS ABOUT US! I FELT A WAVE OF RAUSEA COME OVER ME! AS I LEFT THE TENT FOR A BREATH OF FRESH AIR, I HEARD BLARTZ'S HYSTERICAL VOICE...
GET OUT! GET! YOU'RE THROUGH! YOU CAN'T DO YOUR ACT NOW... BLIND! BET OUT AND DON'T COME BACK!

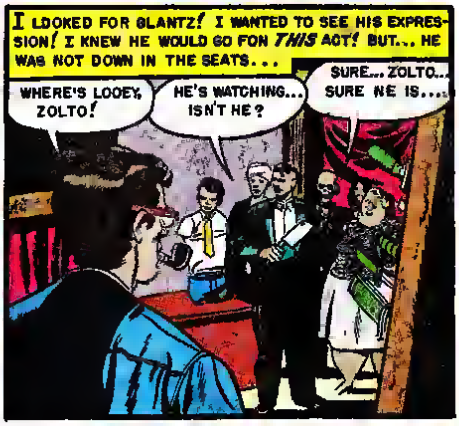
I THOUGHT OF CALLIHG THE PDLICE, BUT I KHEW THAT IT WDULO OO ND GDDD! GLANTZ HAO AGTED IN SELF-DEFEHSE! AHD HE HAD THE FHEAKS SO TEN-RONIZED, THEY WOULO BE AFHAID TO TESTIFY TO THE CONTRANY! A FEW WEEKS LATEN...
ZDLTD * WHAT ARE YOU OOIHG HIOIHG IN HERE!
WHO... MN... HASTINGS?
YES, ZDLTO! IT IS I! WHY ANE YDU HIDING?
IT'S FANHY AHO GDNPUS AHD XETAL AND THE REST! THEY'NE TAKING GANE DF ME TILL MY EYES HEAL...
THAT'S GOOD OF THEM ZOLTO!
YES! THEY BRING ME FOOD... AND THEY HIDE ME FROM MR. GLANTZ!
BUT... YOU GAN'T GO ON LIKE THIS FOREVER, ZOLTO!
OH, NO! WE'RE WORKING ON THAT...
WONKIHG ON WHAT?
AN AOT! THEY'RE TEAOHING ME! IT'S EASY... EASIEN THAN I THDUGHT!
TEACHING YOU AN AOT?
YES! THNOWING KNIYES AGAIH! IT'S EASY! THEY JUST FACE ME TOWARD THE BOAND... AHD I THY TO VISUALIZE MY PANTNEN...
PANTHEN?
DH, OF COURSE WE'NE DNLY USING A DUMMY! WHEH I GET REALLY GOOO, THEN... MAYBE...
5.

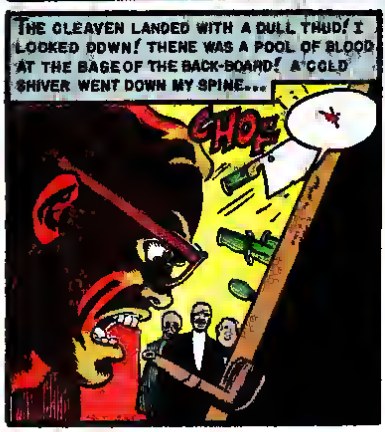
ZOLTO WAS LIKE A LITTLE BOY AGAIN! HE BUBBLED AND CHATTERED ABOUT HIS NEW ACT AND HOW GOOD IT WOULD BE! I FELT SO SORRY FOR HIM...
SO YOU WON'T TELL MR. GLANTZ ABOUT IT, WILL YOU, MR. HASTINGS? AT LEAST NOT UNTIL I'M READY!
READY FOR WHAT?
READY TO SHOW IT TO HIM, OF COURSE! THEN... MAYBE HE'LL FORGIVE ME... AND TAKE ME BACK!
YES, ZOLTO! MAYBE HE... WILL... FORGIVE YOU!
I FELT AS IF I WANTED TO CRY! THE FREAKS HAD BEEN WONDERS WITH ZOLTO! HE KNEW NO MALICE! AND HE HAD SUCH CONFIDENCE IN HIMSELF...
I... I WONDER IF IT COULD BE POSSIBLE... IF HE REALLY COULD GO ON AGAIN... THROWING KNIVES... BLIND!
AND THEN... ONE RIGHT ABOUT A MONTH LATER... ZOLTO STUMBLED INTO MY OFFICE...
TONIGHT, MR. HASTINGS! I'M GOING TO PERFORM TONIGHT! FANNY TOLD ME MR. GLANTZ WOULD SEE MY ACT TONIGHT!
I'LL BE THERE, ZOLTO! I WOULDN'T MISS IT FOR ANYTHING!
AND I MEANT IT! THAT NIGHT I MADE MY WAY TO THE FREAK TENT! I GUESS THE AUDITION HAD ALREADY STARTED, FOR I HEARD LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE AS I ENTERED...
BRAVO, ZOLTO!
GOOD SHOT!
A LITTLE HIGHER THIS TIME...
I WATCHED FASCINATED! I HAD COME IN BEHIND THE BACKBOARD SO THAT I COULD SEE THEIR FACES! THEY WERE SMILING! IT HAD BEEN SO LONG SINCE I HAD SEEN ANY OF THEM SMILE...
NOW, AN ICE-PICK, ZOLTO! TO THE LEFT THIS TIME... JUST ABOUT AN INCH...
ZOLTO THREW THE ICE PICK! IT MADE A DULL SOUND AS IT HIT! ZOLTO WAS SMILING TOO, ALTHOUGH IT WAS A BLANK SMILE! A FACE WITHOUT EYES LACKS SO MUCH EXPRESSION...
GOOD, ZOLTO! HAH, HAH! GOOD!
ANOTHER ZOLTO! ANOTHER... THIS TIME HIGHER...
...AND TO THE RIGHT...

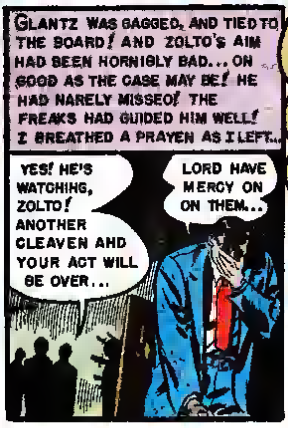

THE SECOND ICE-PICK WAS THROWN! IT, TOO, HIT TRUE! THEY ROARED WITH DELIGHT! I APPLAUDED TOO, ALTHOUGH I COULD NOT SEE FROM MY VANTAGE POINT HOW CLOSE IT CAME...
SOMEONE'S THERE! BEHIND THE BOARD!
IS THAT YOU, MR. HASTINGS?
YES, ZOLTO! IT IS I!

I'M SHOWING MR. GLANTZ MY ACT! CAN YOU SEE WELL?
WELL ENOUGH, ZOLTO! GO AHEAD!


I DID NOT WANT TO MOVE! I HAD NOT SEEN SUCH HAPPINESS AMONG THE FREAKS FOR SO LONG THAT I WANTED TO STAY WHERE I COULD SEE THEIR FACES... NOT THE BOARD...
NOW A CLEAVER, ZOLTO...A CLEAVER...
DOWN A LITTLE THIS TIME...
AND OVER TO THE RIGHT AN INCH...


I LOOKED FOR GLANTZ! I WANTED TO SEE HIS EXPRESSION! I KNEW HE WOULD GO FOR THIS ACT! BUT... HE WAS NOT DOWN IN THE SEATS...
WHERE'S LOOEY, ZOLTO!
HE'S WATCHING... ISN'T HE?
SURE... ZOLTO... SURE HE IS...


THE CLEAVEN LANDED WITH A DULL THUD! I LOOKED DOWN! THENE WAS A POOL OF BLOOD AT THE BASE OF THE BACK-BOARD! A COLD SHIVER WENT DOWN MY SPINE...
CHOP


GLANTZ WAS GAGGED, AND TIED TO THE BOARD! AND ZOLTO'S AIM HAD BEEN HORNIBLY BAD... OR GOOD AS THE CASE MAY BE! HE HAD NARELY MISSED! THE FREAKS HAD GUIDED HIM WELL! I BREATHED A PRAYEN AS I LEFT...
YES! HE'S WATCHING, ZOLTO! ANOTHER CLEAVEN AND YOUR ACT WILL BE OVER...
LORD HAVE MERCY ON ON THEM...

HEH, HEH! AND THAT'S HENRY HASTINGS' STORY! STRIKING TALE, EH? PIERCING FINISH? WELL, OLD LOOEY CERTAINLY HAD IT COMING... AND IT CAME! ICE-PICKS... KNIVES... CLEAVENS! OH, THAT LAST CLEAVEN WAS THE TOPPER... HEH, HEH... GET IT? AFTER THAT, GLANTZ LOST HIS HEAD! WELL, SEE YOU IN MY OWN MAGAZINE, TALES FROM THE CRYPT! UNTIL THEN... DON'T LISTEN TO OLD KNIVE'S TALES!

It was obvious that he was a goner and would be dead within five minutes. His coat and shirt were slashed brutally and blood came pouring out of him in torrents. His eyes were wide and glassy, his mouth moved instinctively but the only sounds which came to his greyish lips were gurgled and incoherent. And then suddenly his body stopped quivering for a moment and he looked up with a glint of recognition at the Police officers surrounding him.

"Out at Fairview..." he whispered, and the Police Stenographer pressed closer, notebook ready. "F-Fairview ... the cemetery," continued the man with the knife slashes draining his lifeblood away. "The headstone ... it's marked ... P-Paul Kleeg ..."

The Homicide Captain leaned over the dying man. "Who are you ... how did you get to Police Headquarters? Who stabbed you ... where are they?"

The man's mouth moved convulsively and his words were barely audible. "M-My name ... *Weldon*. T-Two days ago ... got out of State Prison. Came here to see Kleeg's grave ... open it ... make sure he *was* dead like papers said. Kleeg was in on bank job with me ten years ago ... *I* was grabbed ... he got away. Then I heard he died ... eight years ago ... came to make sure!"

A bubble of blood burst on the man's lips and a shudder passed down his body, but after a moment he continued: "Opened his grave ... c-case all rotten and full of weeds ... only a skeleton left there ... grinning as if Kleeg was laughing at me! I bent over skeleton ... to see if he was buried with ring or any other jewelry I could use ... when his hand reached out and grabbed me! I-I couldn't move ... then he stabbed me with some kind of blade he had ... some kind of knife ..."

The man's head fell back and a last tortured gasp escaped him. He was dead. The Captain gave his orders in a hushed voice: "Have the Morgue pick 'im up right away! Name's *Weldon*, eh? Must be the one listed among this month's releases from upriver. Come on ... we'll saunter over to Kleeg's grave out at Fairview! Craziest story I ever heard ... imagine, a skeleton stabbing a man to death!

The circle of Police stared into the opened grave. The Captain spoke first, as he moved down to it, past the cemetery workmen who had shovelled away the dirt that covered it. "A skeleton ... just like Weldon described it. And it looks as if it *has* been dug up very recently ..."

"Craziest story *any* of us ever heard!" a Sergeant said aloud. "What probably happened is that Weldon went off his rocker and stabbed *himself!* Who ever heard of a skeleton...?"

At that moment the Captain looked up from the decayed coffin, his face chalk-white. "His story *is* crazy," he said, "and only an insane man would believe it! But just look at THIS!"

The officers craned forward. There, grasped in the fleshless hand of Paul Kleeg's skeleton, was a blade several inches long. Rusted so completely that it had almost merged with the long tapering bones which clutched it! And covering the entire length of that corroded blade was a sticky dark brown substance. Blood, just beginning to dry!

YOU PEER THROUGH THE BLINDING DOWNPOUR AT THE SIGN! THE HEADLIGHTS OF YOUR CAR REFLECT ON THE WATER-SOAKED WOOD! YOU CAN BARELY MAKE OUT THE FADED LETTERS! THEY READ...

'END-OF-THE-ROAD INN'! THANK GOODNESS! I COULDN'T GO ON MUCH FURTHER IN THIS STORM!

END OF THE ROAD INN

YOU TURN INTO THE TREE-LINED ROAD! UP AHEAD, YOU CAN SEE THE LIGHTS OF THE INN SHINING THROUGH THE HEAVY RAIN! YOU PULL UP TO THE DOOR...

I HOPE THERE'S A ROOM AVAILABLE!

IN ANSWER TO YOUR FEVERISH KNOCKING, THE DOOR IS OPENED BY A LARGE UGLY-FEATURED MAN...

YES?

I...I WAS CAUGHT IN THE STORM! I WAS WONDERING IF I COULD FIND LODGING HERE... FOR TONIGHT!

HIS BEADY EYES FOLLOW YOU AS HE STEPS ASIDE AND YOU ENTER THE GLOOMY INTERIOR...

IS THERE A ROOM FOR ME?

I THINK I HAVE ONE VACANT!

YOU STUDY YOUR HOST! HE IS TALL, ALMOST OVERSIZED! HE STEPS BEHIND THE DESK AND PUSHES A BATTERED BOOK...ITS PAGES YELLOWED WITH AGE...FORWARD...

IF YOU'LL SIGN THE REGISTER...

OF COURSE!

THEN THE INNKEEPER TAKES A KEY AND LEADS YOU UPSTAIRS TO YOUR ROOM! AS HE OPENS THE DOOR, THE *MUSTY ODOR* OF *FOUL AIR* SEARS YOUR NOSTRILS...

IF YOU NEED ANYTHING, JUST LET ME KNOW!

THANK YOU! I WILL!

HE LEAVES! YOU LISTEN AS HIS HEAVY FOOTSTEPS DESCEND DARK STAIRS AND FADE OUT OF EARSHOT! YOU LOOK ABOUT YOU! THE ROOM IS SPARSELY FURNISHED! A THICK LAYER OF DUST COVERS EVERYTHING!

WELL! I GUESS I'LL TURN IN! DRIVING THROUGH THE RAIN HAS TIRED ME!

THE ROOM IS *COLD* AND *DANK*! YOU SEARCH THE CLOSET FOR A BLANKET! THERE IS NONE! THE SINGLE THIN BED SPREAD WILL NOT BE ENOUGH! YOU LOOK FOR THE HOUSE PHONE...

BLAST IT! GUESS I'LL HAVE TO GO *DOWNSTAIRS* AND ASK HIM FOR A BLANKET!

YOU OPEN THE DOOR OF YOUR ROOM AND LOOK OUT! THE HALL IS DARK AND DESERTED! YOU GO DOWNSTAIRS! THE LIGHT FROM THE FIREPLACE CASTS DANCING SHADOWS THROUGH THE LOBBY! THERE IS AN EERIE STRANGENESS ABOUT IT! AND THE INNKEEPER IS NOWHERE TO BE SEEN...

H-M-M-M! GUESS I'LL HAVE TO *WAIT* UNTIL HE COMES BACK FROM WHEREVER HE IS! THIS *CHAIR* LOOKS *INVITING*...

YOU SIT DOWN! THE WNNMTH OF THE DNNGKLING FINE FEELS GOOO! YOU GNZE NT THE LIDKING FLAMES...
WONOEN WHENE HE CAN GE...
THE FINE LEAPS UPWARO! THE GUNNING LOGG SPNTTEN NND SNAP! YOU SIGH! YES! THE DNIVE THNOUGN THE RAIN HAS EXNAUGTED YOU...
I'O JUST AS SOON SPEND THE NIGHT OOWN HERE SEFONE THIS FIRE! IT'S SO...WARM!
SUDDENLY THE BLOOO FREEZES IN YOUN VEINS! FNOM OUT OF THE ONNKNESS COMES...
A MOAN!
GOO... WHNT A HOR-RIBLE SOUND!
YOU JUMP TO YOUN FEET! YOU STHNIN YOUR ENRS.. LISTENING! THEN YOU HENN IT AGAIN! AN AGO-NIZING MOAN! IT MNKES THE HAIN ON YOUN NEDK CRAWL...
IT'S GOMING FNOM BEHIND THAT DOOR!
YOU STEAL YOWAND THE OOON! YOU REACH OUT CAUTIOUSLY AND TWIST THE KNOS! IT SWINGS OPEN! STEPS LEAO OOWN INYO THE DARKNESS! FROM DOWN THENE... IN THE BLACKNESS..YOU HEAR IT AGAIN... SUT WEAKEN...
I'VE GOT YO SEE WNNT IT IS! PENHAPS THE INNKEEPEN...
YOU MOVE SLOWLY OOWN NICKETY STEPS! ALL IS SILENT NOW! YOU LISTEN! THEN ANOTHER SOUNO NENGNES YOUN EANS! A STEADY DRIP..DRIP..
LIKE DNOPS OF WNTEN.. FALLING INTO N BUCKET...
YOU CURSE YOUNSELF FOR NOT BRINGING N FLASHLIGHT! THE DRIP...DRIP..DRIPPING IS CLOSEN NOW! YOU'RE NLMOST UPON IT! THEN YOU NEAN THE WNIMPERING.. THE WENK SND WHIMPENING! YOU SEANON YOUR POCKETS FOR A MNTCH! YOU FINO ONE! YOU STRIKE IT! THE CELLNN FILLS WITH LIGNT...
DN, LORD!
3

IT IS A MAN! A STRANGER... NOT THE INNKEEPER! HE LIES ON A TABLE...TIED THERE BY ROPES! HIS EYES ARE WIDE IH HORROR AS HE STARES AT THE BURNING MATCH! THEN YOU LOOK DOWN...

A PAN! A PAN HALF-FILLED WITH... BLOOD!

YOUR STOMACH HEAVES! YOU WRETCH WITH NAUSEA! THE MAN'S ARM HANGS LIMPLY...THE WRIST SLASHED! THE BLOOD TRICKLES DOWN HIS FINGERTIPS AND DRIPS INTO THE PAN! HE WHIMPERS...LIKE A DOG THAT HAS JUST BEEN STRUCK BY A CAR...

HE...HE'S BLEEDING TO DEATH! I'VE GOT TO...

THE MATCH SURHS YOU AND YOU DROP IT IN PAIN! THE DARKNESS GLOSES IN! THE STEADY DRIPPING CONTINUES! SUDDENLY...

THE CELLAR DOOR! SOMEONE'S COMING!

YOU HIDE! YOU COWER SEHIND A PILE OF SOXES! A MAN THUNPS DOWH THE STEPS! HE OARRIES A LAHTENH! HIS EYES GLEAM IH THE FLICKERING YELLOW LIGHT...

THE INNKEEPER!

YOU WATCH, TOO FRIGHTENED TO MOVE! HE APPROACHES THE MAN TIED TO THE TABLE! THE WHIMPERING HAS CEASED NOW! EVEN THE DRIPPING HAS SLOWED CONSIDERABLY! A CREEPING HORROR TELLS YOU...

HE... HE'S DEAD!

THE INNKEEPER NODS HIS HEAD AS IF IN SILENT AGREEMENT! HE UNTIES THE LIMP BODY AND SLINGS IT OVER HIS SHOULDERS! HE CARRIES IT THROUGH A DOORWAY...

I...I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY FROM HERE! THE IHHKEEPEN... HE... HE'S A MANIAC!

YOU START TOWARD THE STAIRS! YOU AVOID LOOKING AT THE PAN ON THE FLOOR! THEN, YOU STOP...STARTLED! A MOTOR HAS STARTED! IT THROBS...MATCHING THE RAGING BEAT OF YOUR OWN HEART! YOUR EYES FOLLOW THE SOUND...

IT...IT LOOKS LIKE A FROZEN-FOOD-LOCKER!

A MORBID DUHIOSITY DRIVES TOU FORWARD! YOU HESITATE BEFORE IT... BUT THEN TOU LIFT THE LID...

RD! *NO!* LORD... *LORD, NO!*

IRSIDE THE HEFRISERATED LOOKER IB A BAHHEL... A BARREL DF REDDISH-BHOWR LIDUID! A BAHHEL DF *BLOOD!* YOU SLAM THE LID BHUT AHD TUHR... LEAHING OH THE LOCKEH FOR BALARDE...

HE... HE'S A *VAMPIRE!* RE COLLECTS THE *BLOOD* OF HIS *VICTIMS!*

YOU START TOWAHD THE STAIRWAY... BUT THEH TOU REAH THE IHHKEEPER RETUHH-ING! TOU JUST HAVE ENOUBR TIME TO HIDE! RE ENTEHS THE RODM... HIS EYES BLEAM-ING... RIS LIFB MOIST! HE FIDKB UP THE PAN OF HED LIDUID FROM TRE FLOOR...

THEN... AB YOU WATCR IR TERROH... HE OFEHS THE FREEZER AHD POURS THE CONTENTS DF TRE PAH IHTO TRE BARREL...

THEN HE BEBINS TO SHUT THE LID... HE BTOPS! RE OPENS IT AGAIR! HIB CRUEL LIPS SPREAD IH AH EVIL BRIH! HE REACRES FOR A TIH CUP HANGING ON TRE WALL...

HE STOOPS DVEH, HEAOHING IRTO THE BAHREL! YOU HEAH THE SPLASHING OF THE SICKLY HED-BRDWR LIDUID AS RE DIPS IRTO IT...

HE... HE'S GOING TO...

YOU WATCR RIH BRIRS TRE CUP TO HIS LIPS AHD DRINK IT ODWH! A SMALL BTREAH TRICKLES DOWR RIS CHIH! YOU BDREAM...

YAAAAAAAH!

IT IS TOO MUCH FOR YOU! YOU DASH YOWARD THE STAIRS SHRIEKING! YOUR HEAD SPINS...THE STAIRS SEEM TO MELT BEFORE YOU! YOU SPRAWL, HALF-WAY UP!
YOU... YOU'VE BEEN SPYING ON ME!
IN A FLASH HE IS UPON YOU...HIS STRONG HANDS HOLDING YOU! YOU'RE WEAK WITH FEAR AND NAUSEA! YOU CANNOT FIGHT HIM...
I HADN'T PLANNED ON ANOTHER VICTIM TONIGHT!
HE CARRIES YOU TO THE TABLE! HE TIES YOU DOWN! YOU SCREAM...
IT IS USELESS TO CRY OUT! WE ARE QUITE ALONE IN THE INN! HE WAS THE ONLY OTHER GUEST...
YOU WATCH, WIDE-EYED, AS HE BRINGS THE PAN AND PLACES IT UNDER THE TABLE...UNDER YOUR HANGING ARM...
YOU... YOU'RE INHUMAN... A MAD FIEND!
PERHAPS!
THE KNIFE BLADE GLITTERS IN THE LANTERN LIGHT! HE COMES TOWARD YOU... BRANDISHING IT...
HAVE PITY...SOB... PITY...
I NEED YOUR BLOOD! I MUST SAVE IT...
THE KNIFE BURNS AS THE COLD BLADE SLIDES INTO YOUR WRIST! YOUR HEAD SWIMS! YOU CAN HEAR HIM TALKING ..AND THE STEADY DRIP... DRIP...
SOMETIMES I HAVE NO GUESTS FOR WEEKS! BUT I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY! I HAVE MY SUPPLY...THERE...READY WHEN I NEED IT...
YOUR HEAD POUNDS NOW! THE ROOM WEAVES BEFORE YOU! YOU FEEL YOURSELF SLIPPING...SLIPPING INTO THE BLACKNESS OF UNCONSCIOUSNESS...WEAK... DIZZY... THE DRIP... DRIP... DRIP...

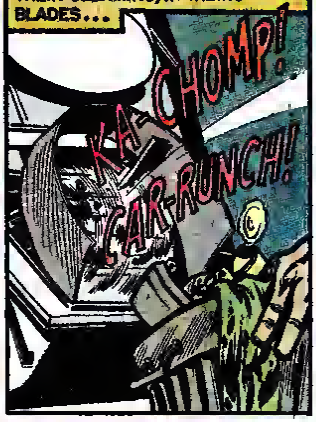
SUDDENLY YOU OPEN YOUR EYES! YOU SQUINT! THE FIRE IS LOW NOW...BUT GLOWING WARM! YOU ARE IN THE CHAIR BEFORE IT...
OH, GOD! IT WAS ONLY A DREAM! A HORRIBLE NIGHTMARE!
YOU BREATH A SIGH OF RELIEF! YOU'D BEEN DREAMING THE WHOLE THING! YOU LOOK UP! THE INNKEEPER IS SMILING DOWN AT YOU...
I DIDN'T HAVE THE HEART TO DISTURB YOU!
YOU SHOULD HAVE! I HAD THE MOST HIDEOUS NIGHTMARE! I... I...
SUDDENLY YOU HEAR IT! THE STEADY DRIPPING! YOU START TO RISE! YOU CANNOT MOVE! YOU'RE TIED TO THE CHAIR! AND BENEATH YOUR SLASHED WRIST IS A PAN...HALF-FILLED WITH BLOOD...
IT'S TRUE! MY DREAM...YOU ARE A VAMPIRE!
THE INNKEEPER'S SMILE VANISHES AS HE SCOWLS AT YOU! THERE IS DISGUST ON HIS FACE...
HOW DARE YOU CALL ME A VAMPIRE!
YOU'RE DRAINING MY BLOOD! YOU'RE GOING TO PUT IT IN THE BARREL... DOWNSTAIRS...IN THE FREEZE-CHEST! YOU ARE A VAMPIRE...
YOU'RE WRONG, MY FRIEND! I AM NO VAMPIRE! I HATE BLOOD! I CAN'T STAND MEAT THAT TASTES OF BLOOD! I AM A GHOUL! I LIVE ON BLOODLESS...FLESH! I HAVE A FREEZE-LOCKER DOWNSTAIRS...BUT IT'S WELL STOCKED WITH DEAD HUMAN FLESH!
A GHOUL! THE DREAM...REALITY...THE SAME...YET DIFFERENT! THE BLACKNESS IS CLOSING IN ON YOU NOW! THE DRIPPING IS SLOWING UP! PERHAPS THIS TOO IS BUT A DREAM! PERHAPS YOU WILL WAKE UP FROM THIS NIGHTMARE, ALSO! THE LAST THING YOU SEE...BEFORE EVERYTHING FADES ...IS THE INNKEEPER...AND HIS MEAT CLEAVER...
7

THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HEH, HEH! AN INCREASE IN THE POPULATION OF A GREAT CITY'S TEEMING MILLIONS IS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE STATISTICIAN... BUT TO THE SANITATION DEPT. IT MEANS ONLY THAT MUCH MORE GARBAGE TO COLLECT...

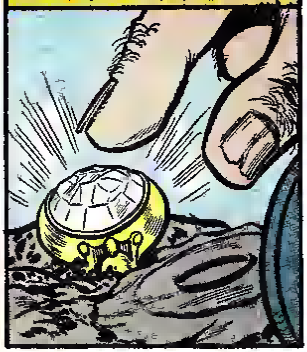
THE CITY HAS A HUGE, EFFICIENT SYSTEM FOR THE REMOVAL OF TRASH, AND ONE OF ITS MOST RESPECTED ASSETS IS ITS FLEET OF STREAMLINED TRUCKS!

THESE PROUD VEHICLES COVER EVERY PART OF THE METROPOLIS, AND THERE ARE BUT FEW ITEMS THAT CANNOT BE CRUSHED, BROKEN AND HACKED TO BITS BY THEIR GLEAMING, WHIRLING BLADES...

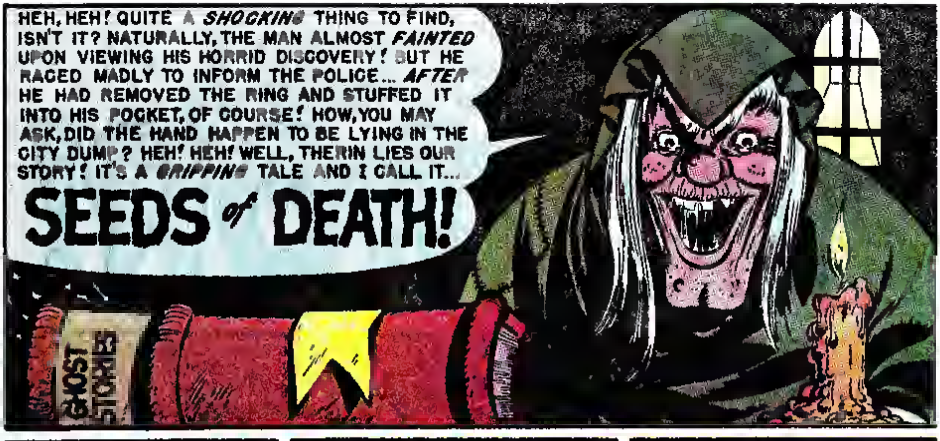


HAVING EATEN THEIR FILL OF GARBAGE, THEY AT ONCE TRAVEL TO THE CITY DUMP AND PURR CONTENTEDLY WHILE THEY DISCHARGE THEIR CARGO.

HERE IS WHERE EVERY BIT OF THE CITY'S COLLECTED WASTE IS BROUGHT. AND IT IS HERE, IN THIS SCAVENGERS' PARADISE, THAT ONE MAY FIND...



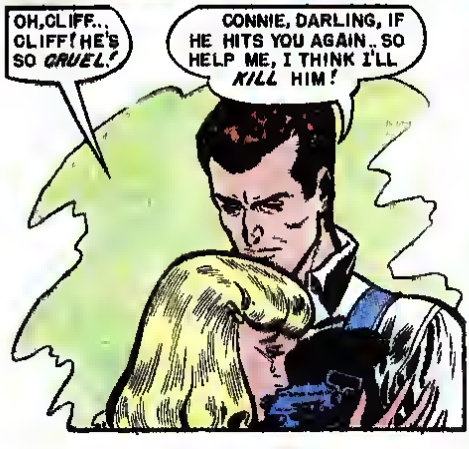
...ALMOST ANYTHING!

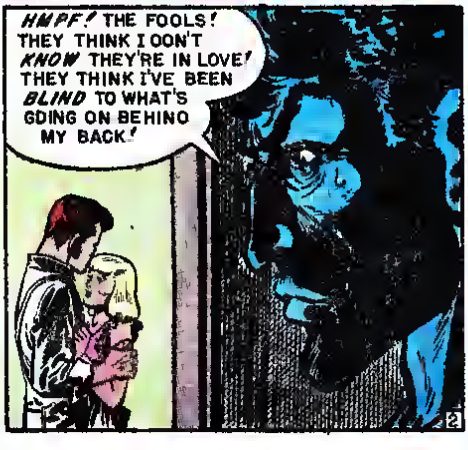

HEH, HEH! QUITE A SHOCKING THING TO FIND, ISN'T IT? NATURALLY, THE MAN ALMOST FAINTED UPON VIEWING HIS HORRID DISCOVERY! BUT HE RAGED MADLY TO INFORM THE POLICE... AFTER HE HAD REMOVED THE RING AND STUFFED IT INTO HIS POCKET, OF COURSE! HOW, YOU MAY ASK, DID THE HAND HAPPEN TO BE LYING IN THE CITY DUMP? HEH! HEH! WELL, THERIN LIES OUR STORY! IT'S A GRIPPING TALE AND I CALL IT...
SEEDS of DEATH!
BERKLEY ISSUES

LET'S GO BACK IN TIME TO WHERE OUR STORY REALLY BEGAN... TO A SMALL FARM ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE LARGE CITY.

ON THIS PARTICULAR FARM LIVED THE OWNER, BASIL WOODS... HIS WIFE CONNIE...

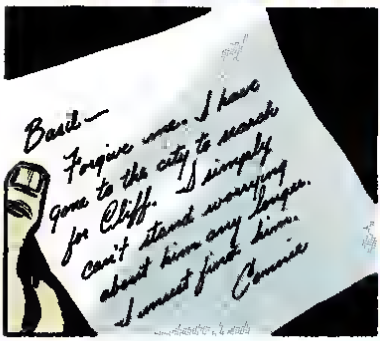
...AND A HIRED HAND NAMED CLIFF!

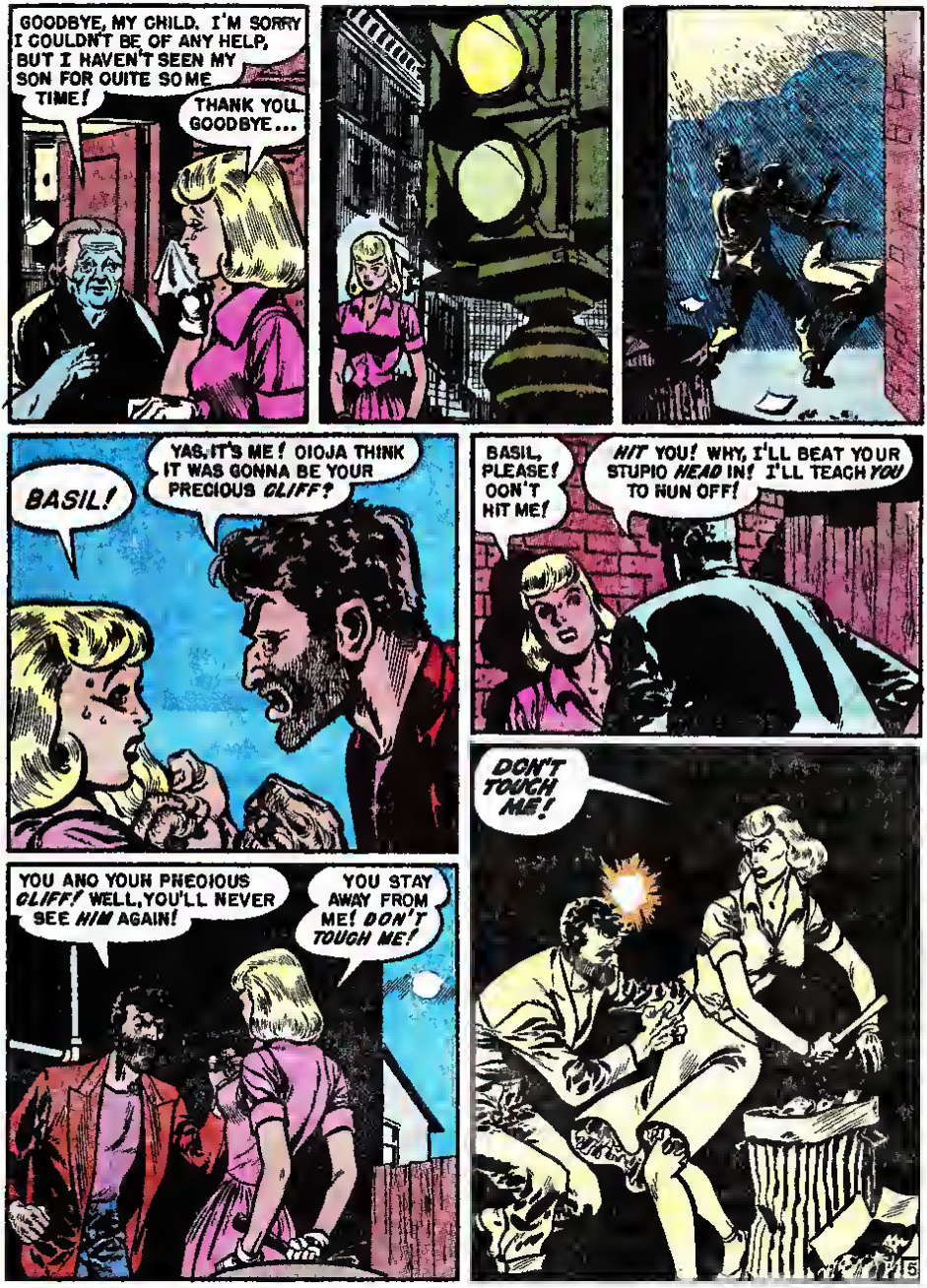

OH, CLIFF... CLIFF! HE'S SO CRUEL!
CONNIE, DARLING, IF HE HITS YOU AGAIN.. SO HELP ME, I THINK I'LL KILL HIM!


HMPF! THE FOOLS! THEY THINK I DON'T KNOW THEY'RE IN LOVE! THEY THINK I'VE BEEN BLIND TO WHAT'S GOING ON BEHIND MY BACK!

ND MAN CAN TAKE MY WIFE FROM ME AND LIVE! I'LL FIX THE DIRTY HOME-WRECKER WHEN THE TIME COMES!
HEH,HEH! WELL,THAT'S THE SITUATION, DEAR READERS... THE ETERNAL TRIANGLE! TIME PASSED... AND BASIL WAITED PATIENTLY, UNTIL ONE DAY...
CLIFF, WHILE YOU'RE IN TOWN TODAY, WOULD YOU BUY ME SOME GARDENIA SEEDS? I WANT TO PLANT THEM IN THE GARDEN!
SURE, MRS. WOODS!
HE'LL BE IN THE CITY ALL DAY... WON'T BE BACK TILL LATE TO-NIGHT! AND HE'LL PROBABLY TAKE THE SHORT-CUT 'CROSS THE FIELD TO THE HOUSE... HMM-M...
... AND SO, LATE THAT NIGHT...
'EVENING, CLIFF! DID YOU GET MY WIFE'S GARDENIA SEEDS?
EH? OH... HI, MR. WOODS! YES, I HAVE THEM RIGHT HERE!
HERE THEY ARE! WANT TO TAKE A LOOK?
SEED
THWINK!
;GASP!; THERE...IT'S DONE! NOW TO BURY HIM...;GASP!;...RIGHT HERE! HEE,HEE! IN TIME TO COME, HIS BODY'LL MAKE FINE FERTILIZER FOR THIS FIELD! ;GASP!;
3

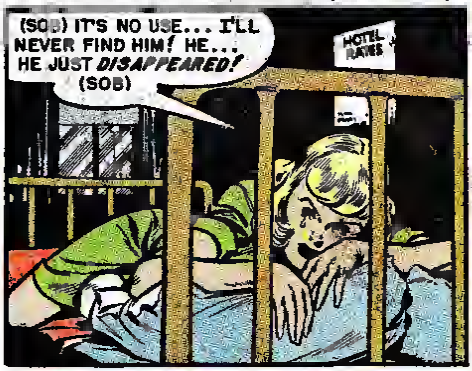
WELL, THE DAYS *DID* PASS BUT CONNIE *DIDN'T* FORGET! AND ONE EVENING AS BASIL RETURNED FROM THE FIELDS..




GOODBYE, MY CHILD. I'M SORRY I COULDN'T BE OF ANY HELP, BUT I HAVEN'T SEEN MY SON FOR QUITE SOME TIME!
THANK YOU. GOODBYE...
BASIL!
YAS, IT'S ME! OIOJA THINK IT WAS GONNA BE YOUR PRECIOUS CLIFF?
BASIL, PLEASE! OON'T HIT ME!
HIT YOU! WHY, I'LL BEAT YOUR STUPIO HEAD IN! I'LL TEACH YOU TO NUN OFF!
YOU AND YOUR PHECIOUS CLIFF! WELL, YOU'LL NEVER SEE HIM AGAIN!
YOU STAY AWAY FROM ME! DON'T TOUCH ME!
DON'T TOUCH ME!

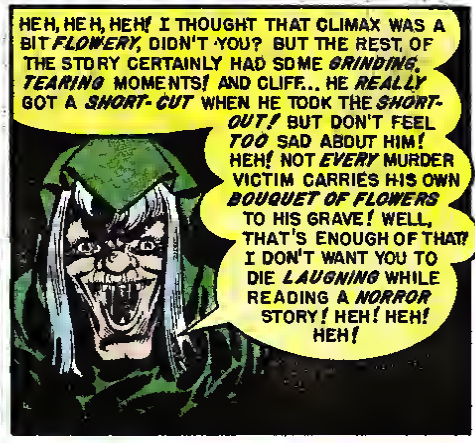
OH,GOOD LORD! WHAT HAVE I OONE?(SOB) HE'S UNCONSCIOUS!
(SOB!) I'M...I'M SO CONFUSED.. SO FRIGHTENED! WHAT'S THAT NOISE?
A TRUCK. COMING OOWN THE STREET! IT'S STOPPING! GOOD HEAVENS! I CAN'T LET THEM FIND ME HERE! WHAT'LL I DO?
WAIT! I KNOW... I'LL JUST ORAG BASIL.. (UNH!) OVER HERE BY THE WALL.(GASP!)
(UNH!)... AND STUFF HIM INTO THIS ..(GASP!) THIS BIG CAN! THEY WON'T SEE HIM HERE.. (GASP!) PUT SOME PAPERS OVER HIM..
...ANO WHILE THEIR BACKS ARE TURNEO...
..I'LL CALMLY WALK AWAY...
DSC
6

HEH! NATURALLY, CONNIE WAS UNAWARE OF HER HUSBAND'S FATE, AND FOR THE NEXT FEW WEEKS, SHE SEARCHED THE CITY IN VAIN... FOR CLIFF...



FINALLY, SHE RETURNED TO THE FARM. SAD AND WEARY, SHE TROD THE SHORT-CUT ACROSS THE FIELD TOWARD THE HOUSE. SUDDENLY, SHE STOPPED...HER EYES WIDENED!

SHE STOOD TRANSFIXED IN HORROR! BEFORE HER, NOT TEN FEET FROM WHERE SHE STOOD, WAS A MOUND OF *GARDENIAS!* ALL AT ONCE, THERE CAME THE SHOCKING REALIZATION THAT AT LAST SHE HAD FOUND... HER PRECIOUS CLIFF.



The
Old Witch